



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D. C. 20535-0001

June 23, 2008

Honorable John Lewis  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This responds to your letter to Director Mueller dated June 4, 2008, requesting information on complaints received by the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) which reference economic stimulus payments. Your letter indicates an interest in the number of "phishing" complaints received by IC3 during 2008, the number of IRS "spoof" complaints received during that same time (and the number of these which specifically reference economic stimulus payments) and a brief description of the type of complaint that references economic stimulus payments.

With regard to the number of "phishing" complaints received during 2008, any numbers that we provide would likely be unreliable. "Phishing" is a term used to describe a social engineering scheme by which an individual is convinced to voluntarily disclose personal identifying information which is then used by criminals to steal the individual's identity or for some other illicit purpose. Very few people, typically only those who are technologically savvy, complain of "phishing." Many people report being "hacked" when they were actually "phished." For this reason, the number of complaints which IC3 receives which specifically mention "phishing" likely significantly under-reports the problem.

With regard to IRS "spoof" complaints received during 2008, and the number of these complaints which reference economic stimulus payments, IC3 compiled the following information:

Month	IRS "Spoofs"	Economic Stimulus Payments Referenced
January	69	1
February	20	0
March	49	1
April	73	23
May	144	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>122</b>

Honorable John Lewis

The IRS "spoofs" which reference economic stimulus payments typically read as follows:

"Over 130 million Americans will receive funds as part of President Bush program to jumpstart the economy.

Our records indicate that you are qualified to receive the 2008 Economic Stimulus Refund.

The fastest and easiest way to receive your refund is by direct deposit to your checking/savings account.

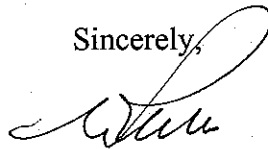
Please follow the link and fill out the form and submit before May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to ensure that your refund will be processed as soon as possible.

Submitting your form on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008 or later means that your refund will be delayed due to the volume of requests we anticipate for the Economic Stimulus Refund.

To access Economic Stimulus refund, please [click here](#)."

Thank you for you interest in this important matter. Should you have further questions regarding or any other issue concerning the FBI, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Richard C. Powers  
Assistant Director  
Office of Congressional Affairs

1 - Honorable Jim Ramstad  
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